RESTORATION REVIEW

THE ARTICLE BEN ASKED ME TO WRITE

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Well, this article is for Ben. He asked me to write it. Reading together as we are through the entire Bible, using just now *The Living Bible,* Ben is especially impressed with what the scriptures say about Jesus and children. "Daddy, why don't you write about Jesus and children in *Restoration Review?,*" he has been insisting. I asked him why he thought I should do so. He replied that since Jesus paid children so much attention and loved them so much that it would have to make a good article. So I am writing this article about Benjy, and about Jesus and children, and I will surprise him when he goes along with me to the printer's to get this issue of the paper. I'll have him leaf through it and see his own name in the title. That's what he gets for being so interested in *Restoration Review!*

Even though he is constitutionally opposed to work, he sometimes joins us in the mailing of this paper, talking our heads off in the process. If yours arrives individually wrapped (most do not), the chances are Ben wrapped it. And if you live in Broomfield, Colorado or Pittstown, Pennsylvania it is likely that he has asked a bunch of FBI questions about both you and your town while in the process. And he is quite a joker. He doesn't just tell them; he propounds them. "Daddy, do you know how the man's horse died?" *No. How did the man's horse die?* "He killed him by teaching him how to live without food!" "Daddy, did you ever see a fly cry?" *No, have you?* "No, but I've seen a moth ball." He is both the loudest and laziest boy in Denton, but along with it he is one of the most lovable.

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He and a boy in the block showed up one day with some stuff too expensive for them to buy. A little prying revealed that they came into their possession through shoplifting from a nearby drive-in. Stealing is a good word for it. Being in business ourselves, I explained to Benjy how much more the man would have to sell *at no profit* just to pay for what he had stolen. He became sufficiently penitent when I registered enough shock and dismay that he would do such a thing. But penitence means to make up for the wrong done, at least two-fold. Not only is the merchandise to be returned, but paid for as well. Furthermore he must go to the man, explain what happened, and assure him that he wants

to make it right. I stood aside as he approached the young business man behind the counter. It was real drama.

I can see Benjy even now as he raised his sad, handsome face to the tall man before him, looking him straight in the eye." I stole two cigarette lighters from you. I'm sorry I took them and I want to make it right," he said with a tearless, open face, like a real little gentleman. The startled business man responded as if he had been rehearsing all week — exactly right. After assuring Ben that he had played the part of a man, he proceeded to layout some work he could do around the place, a sufficient number of hours to pay for any wrong done. I appreciated the wisdom in his response. He could have patted Benjy on the head and said, "That's all right, son, and you won't do it anymore." But he could see that a father was trying to teach his son a lesson. He wisely mixed judgment with his mercy. And Ben delighted in doing the assigned work. He felt cleansed in doing it. It was the kind of an experience that a boy will remember for life, a memory that will be on the plus side.

I don't want my children to have memories that some will surely have. One business man told me that while kids will steal things from his store, he will stand at the window and watch them crawl into the back seat of the family car, showing their parents what they got, and then watch in amazement as they drive away.

Well, Benjy is growing up on us. The other day the telephone rang just for him. Ouida whispered to me across the room, "He's got a girl at school, that's his girl!" Believing that he must experience what is due every boy that begins such a venture, once he hung up I began the chorus that soon had all the family singing, *Benjy's got a girl, Benjy's got a girl.* Only tonight he got another call, which he took on the upstairs phone! But the razzing is over. He's launched.

This is the lad that wants me to write about Jesus and children. It impresses me that what impresses Ben about Jesus is that he paid attention to kids. He especially noticed that the disciples, when kids came around, acted like most folk do. They wanted the kids to get lost and not bother the Master, for, after all, he was teaching and doing good and had no time for a bunch of troublesome children. But not Jesus.

This is the way it reads in Ben's *Living Bible*, a copy of which he has all his own.

Once when some mothers were bringing their children to Jesus to bless them, the disciples shooed them away, telling them not to bother Him.

But when Jesus saw what was happening He was very much displeased with His disciples and said to them, "Let the children come to me, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as they. Don't send them away!"

Kids realize that they are always being shooed away. It was no different even with Jesus' own disciples. And Ben noticed that Jesus was "very much displeased" when children were treated this way. He was different when it came to kids, as he was always

different. Even children did not bore him. Busy as he was, he had time for children. Any man says a lot about himself by the way he treats the youngsters that play at his door. But Jesus sees even more in children. The child-likeness that is theirs by nature is made a condition for taking on the divine nature in the kingdom of God. *Anyone who refuses to come to God as a little child will never be allowed into His kingdom,* is his directive.

Jesus saw in children the stuff of God's kingdom. Perhaps he saw a child's innocence as much as anything else. Benjy's response to his wrong-doing, his eagerness to make the wrong right and to remove my disappointment in him is the poverty of spirit that Jesus valued.

There is the child's trust. A child seems to be able to keep on believing when others have faltered. His heart is not prepared to see the bad in people, but he is prepared to accept authority and to rely upon his parents. And a child makes friends even with strangers. A famous person has said that his greatest compliment was when a little boy, a stranger to him, came up and asked him to tie his shoelace. It is too bad that our little ones have to grow up to be suspicious of the world. But in their innocent trust we can see something of what Jesus meant when he likened them to the kingdom.

A child is both dependent and obedient, or at least nature inclines him this way. An heir of independence is rare in childhood, as is exhibition. Normally a child not only learns to obey easily, but he *wants* to be made to obey. And normally he is humble and not given to pretense and shame. When a kid is a showoff it is an indication that something is wrong, however faithful the parents are in their efforts.

As our family read about Jesus and the children, we decided that in laying his hands on them and blessing them Jesus was doing something special for them, not just being friendly and playful. Jewish mothers were eager that their children be blessed by a distinguished rabbi, and Jesus was now so famous that they sought his special blessing for their little ones. We can believe that the children were themselves also attracted to him, that they saw the sunshine in his face and sought the joy and warmth of his presence. Surely when he took a child into his arms and blessed him it made a difference in that child's life.

It is noteworthy that when the disciples asked Jesus about greatness, he called a little child and placed him in their midst, saying in effect *To be great is to be like a child.* There is a tradition that the lad Jesus called to him was the one who became the great Ignatius of Antioch, who served Jesus even unto martyrdom. Be that as it may it is certain that it makes a big difference in one's life when Jesus touches it. This is the point of childlikeness: being open to his blessing, being eager for what he has to offer. This is greatness in God's kingdom. — *the Editor*

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THE COLOR TAX

Take your wrongdoing out of my sight. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow. - Isaiah 1

Aside from what has happened and may still be happening to the Negro in the South, there are some disturbing facts coming out of the North in reference to the black man's plight in that part of our nation.

Take an enlightened city like Chicago for instance. The black man lags far behind the white man in virtually every area of living, even in those cases where the Negro has equal education. The housing market is severely restricted for Negroes, even when they have the money to pay, and this is believed to be at the heart of many other problems. The black houses in Chicago arc on the average 20% smaller and five times more dilapidated. Still they pay the same average rent - and on incomes that are one-third less! This means that white folk, who have more money, spend no more for their superior housing than Negroes do for their slums.

A Negro college graduate in Chicago earns less than a white high school dropout. Because one happens to be black he has more difficulty finding suitable employment, advancing to a higher salary bracket, and living where he chooses to live at an equitable cost. This ean well be called *the color tax*, the only difference being that one is of a different color. He has to pay more for l(\5s, work just as hard for less opportunity to advance, and get less pay for the same work. Some progress has been made in some of these areas, but our nation has hardly measured up to Isaiah's call for justice.

It has not been too many years since the Chicago Real Estate Board would expel any of its members who would sell "white" property to a Negro, and the time was when the homes of blacks would be bombed whenever they attempted to settle among the whites. Even the F .H.A. encouraged community development "along racial lines," thus preserving segregation in the queen city of the midwest. This is Chicago we are talking about, not Birmingham or Atlanta.

That was back a generation or so, and we can be thankful for the progress made. But we have hardly begun the *search for justice* that the prophet calls for. Let us face it. We still tax men for their color, even up North.

I doubt if even we Christians realize how sinful this is, how terribly unjust, how grossly oppressive. Racism is more than a crime against a fellow human being, for it is a heinous sin against God. And we are racists whenever we allow color or nationality to make a difference in either the way we think or act toward our fellows.

Racial prejudice is surely the most insidious and deceptive of all our sins. It eats like gangrene within us, as cancer sometimes does, without our being conscious of it. We are unlike God when we are respecter of persons, and our adversary the devil has us just where he wants us in having us believe that our "benevolence" toward the Negro means that we are not racists.

In an East Texas town I recently sat around the table with men and women who are surely as spiritual as any of its citizenry. They love Jesus and the Bible and enjoy edifying conversation. When the conversation turned to Negroes I noticed a distinct change in attitude. Oh, they all love the Negroes of course, and they believe in treating them right. But . . . One does not have to discuss intermarriage for racism to raise its ugly head. The business man speaks of the peril of hiring "one of them." The society woman talks of the impropriety of "one of them" in her garden club. The PTA officer tells of the problems he or she has with "them" at the meetings. The churches of course are segregated.

It is more of the color tax in East Texas — and in Colorado and California, in Kansas and New York, and in our hearts. We penalize a man because of his color. We allow color to make a difference. A person like myself runs the risk of actually losing friends in suggesting that "I wouldn't want my daughter to marry one of them" is a racist judgment. For some reason one hardly ever hears "I wouldn't want my son to marry one of them." Perhaps this is because, consciously or not, the white person has always assumed that the white male has right to both black and white women.

That term "one of them" is a disrespectful, degrading way of referring to people for whom Christ died. It assumes a stereotype — the lazy, shiftless, dirty, stinking, step'n-fetchit nigger. It seldom occurs to whites that when this stereotype does fit, and of course it does in some cases (with some whites thrown in as well), that it is our sins and the sins of our forebears that are at least partly responsible. History tells us that some of the blacks of Africa, when tracked down by white slave traders, killed themselves rather than be sold on the slave block. They hardly fit the stereotype. When people have been deprived for centuries by slavery and depression we can hardly expect them to be paragons of humanity. And how responsible is white America for that slavery and depression for the black man?

For those of us who believe there is only one important question: *what does Jesus think of a color tax?*

His behavior in the synagogue in Nazareth, when he spoke to the folk about their racial prejudice, would suggest he honors no racial lines nor any color tax. He told the prejudiced Jews, who thought of themselves as heaven's special people, that God was equally concerned for the likes of Sidonians and Syrians. It was here that his own people in his own home town attempted to kill him for his liberal racial views.

Knowing what it means to be despised and rejected. Jesus knows what it means to be black. This he learned through suffering, and that may be why so few of us can identify with the oppressed. When Isaiah calls for *learning* to do good, the implication may be that we too must suffer before we learn to do good and search for justice.

What might be done through legislation about the color tax is an open question, and we will rejoice in whatever progress comes through such means. But disciples of Jesus have the higher obligation to see to it that in their own lives and hearts they become color blind and therefore refuse to levy any color tax - none at all. — *the Editor*

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The Travel Letters of Alexander Campbell . . .

THE GREAT THEMES OF CAMPBELL'S TEACHING

In our last installment we told of Campbell's visit to Nashville in 1827 with his sick wife and of her subsequent death that same year. This was his first extended journey away from Bethany, his earlier visits in to Kentucky and Ohio being in connection with his debates with McCalla and Walker. In this essay we shall deal with one of our main concerns in the series, which is to learn more about what Campbell taught out in the field in his efforts to restore the primitive order of things.

It was out in the field among those who read his publications that he was asked the questions, that he was confronted by irate clergyman, that he met the small and the great in hundreds of frontier communities, and it was here that he gave the best of what he had to offer. While it was the same Campbell who was editor back in the quiet hills of Virginia, his responses were different due to the urgency of the unique circumstances of his situation as a reformer on a new frontier.

We told of Campbell's second marriage to Selina Bakewell, a close friend to his first wife, who urged her husband to select Selina if indeed he chose to remarry. He remained at home for the next few years, save for short excursions among the Baptists in the area and a trip to Cincinnati to debate Robert Owen in 1829. He was editing the *Christian Baptist*, preparing a hymnal that included several of his own hymns, running his farm, and getting ready for his new journal, *Millennial Harbinger,* which began in 1830.

It was that same year, 1830, that he made his second journey to Nashville, taking a long, circuitous route through Ohio and Kentucky. It was out of this trip that came his first series of travel letters, published in volumes 1 and 2 of the *Harbinger* and entitled "Incidents on a Tour to Nashville, Tennessee." This became his general practice, writing at length about his travels, including notes on his discourses, and thereby creating a

depository of valuable Americana as well as significant data on his own movement. It is to these travel letters that we now turn in presenting this unique and neglected area of Campbell's work.

Leaving Bethany on October 29 with Samuel Parmley as his traveling companion, he spent a day in Wheeling taking care of business affairs. He went on to Cambridge, Ohio the next day, discussing the education of youth with Mr. Parmley along the way. In this travel letter he includes a synopsis of his educational philosophy as he presented it to his friend, the essence of which is that only the right kind of education can stop the crime that was rampant on the frontier and that this can be achieved only by people being willing to pay for it through a public education system. Campbell, along with Jefferson earlier, was among the first advocates of public education for all children in the United States. Education was one of his great themes wherever he traveled.

When he arrived in Zanesville, Ohio he hired a lad to serve as a herald among the citizenry, announcing that Alexander Campbell would speak in the courthouse that evening, the sheriff having already given permission for its use. He also sent a note to a Mr. Sedwick, editor of a Baptist paper, who had been vigorously opposing Campbell's efforts, informing him that he was in town and inviting him to the meeting. The editor called at Alexander's quarters and accompanied him to the meeting.

That night he discoursed on the last paragraph of Matthew 28, explaining the nature of the gospel, how nations are to be converted to God, and how the apostles were to have no successors. Wherever he went he had much to say about the adequacy of the Bible as an intelligent revelation of God, thus discrediting the clerical claims for human creeds and a divine call. That night he also reviewed Acts 2, emphasizing verse 38, showing the import of immersion for remission of sins.

Alexander reports that his friend Sedwick had difficulty during the discourse, turning and twisting all the way, and at the end hurried away without even saying goodnight.

Throughout all these letters one will not find Campbell ever *preaching* to an audience. I have yet to find the first instance where he used the term in reference to his work as a reformer. He *lectures, speaks, addresses,* and even *descants.* He even "pronounced an address" and "delivered a lecture," but he never *preaches.* There is an important reason for his careful avoidance of the term. He did not consider himself a preacher or an evangelist, but a teacher and a reformer. *Preaching* was the message to the lost, designed to enroll men into Christ's school; *teaching* was the curriculum they are taught once in that school. Campbell was most particular in the language he chose in describing his work, so he did not "preach sermons." He delivered discourses. He saw his work as being to the church in an effort to restore things that are lacking. It was not the work of an evangelist in the field working with the uninitiated.

Yet one might conclude that Campbell was unnecessarily cautious in this regard, for he most certainly proclaimed the ancient gospel in his travels, and it was not uncommon for scores to be immersed in his meetings. But if he was too cautious we are not cautious enough, for we'll call a "sermon on giving" or a report on the budget the preaching of the gospel.

At the inn that night Alexander was sitting in the lobby near the fireplace writing a letter. Two gentlemen entered, talking about Alexander Campbell." Did you hear Campbell this evening?," asked one." No, I had not time to go; and if I had, I don't know that I should go to hear such a man. He preaches down all preaching, and yet preaches himself. And I am told he holds to a perfect equality among all Christians. I have heard that some private disciples, who say they agree with Campbell in his views of religion, meet every Sunday to celebrate the sacrament without any preacher."

Once through with his letter, Alexander steps up to the fire and joins the men in conversation. Apologetic for having criticized Mr. Campbell in his presence, the kindly man, who was a Presbyterian, went on to question him until midnight. They talked about the meaning of preaching, the supposed "divine call," the spiritual meaning of the Bible, and even the Owen debate, which by that time was well publicized. The man found time to hear Mr. Campbell that night after all, and he left in substantial agreement with the visitor from Virginia.

Traveling by gig, Parmley and Campbell moved on toward Kentucky, with Campbell often reading and writing while his friend drove the two-wheeled, one-horse carriage. One Lord's day found them without a place to meet for public worship, being in the wilderness near New Lancaster, Ohio, so they took turns reading *Matthew* and conversing upon it. During the day's travel they covered the first twenty chapters! Then that night before retiring Campbell wrote an installment of his series on meta-physical regeneration. Much of the material that he wrote for the *Harbinger* he prepared on these long journeys, indicating again and again that he was a man of unbelievable endurance.

Campbell would attend other churches if there was no congregation of his own persuasion. On one occasion at least he visited an Episcopal church, for he was desirous of hearing its respected pastor. But one thing is noteworthy about the instances when he could meet with no congregation. He did not break bread alone or with his companion. This must be because he saw the Lord's supper as a corporate act of a congregation in assembly. If one is unable to be at such assembly, then of course it would not be required of him.

Advancing to Wilmington, Ohio, where he was to meet such future heroes of the movement as Samuel Rogers and Aylett Rains, he found an entire Baptist congregation, excepting one woman, that had "embraced the ancient gospel," a term he often uses. He speaks of their having immersed 197 in the last few months, which was beside the Baptists themselves, for in those days our folk did not rebaptize Baptists.

It is here that Campbell addresses himself to a problem that they had then that is not so common today. In those days congregations were few and far between, and yet the disciples were scattered throughout the wilderness. Should a brother join himself to a congregation when he lives too far from its place of meeting to be able to attend? Campbell said no. And it is this that should determine to which congregation he belongs: the one he can attend each Lord's day. If there is none that he can attend with regularity, then he should belong to none, with it being recognized of course that he nonetheless belongs to the Lord.

Out of this problem came Campbell's preference for small congregations. Not only does this make for the simplicity of the primitive order and spare them of the temptation to build pretentious houses, but it diffuses the light over a much larger area, thus providing for more assemblies for a scattered people. Too, Campbell saw the small church as more conducive to learning. Believing as he did in the *mutual* ministry of an assembly, he passed up no chance to criticize "an assembly of carnal worshipers, in all the pomp and pageantry of the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life,' waiting upon a Parson, all of whom, save one consecrated tongue, are dumb in the Christian worship."

He did allow for a large church when it is convenient for all of them to meet in one place. But even here he suggests that this one large church should have numerous house churches as part of its program, with the elders of the city overseeing them all.

Campbell describes with some detail the addresses he delivered on this extended trip, In Wilmington, Ohio he once used Acts 3 as the basis of his remarks on remission of sins and the seasons of refreshment. In Cincinnati he addressed the disobedient on 1 Sam. 15 and Rom. 2, showing that, as in Saul's sin of doing part of what God said, partial obedience is equivalent to total rejection of the message. The next time around he spoke to the obedient from Col. 3, dealing with the Christian's concern for "the things which are above." In the evening he would sometimes take up where he had left off in his morning's message.

At a country congregation near Cincinnati he spoke on 1 John 4, in which he identified the Antichrist with mysticism, which he believed effected all the sects on the frontier. At Covington, Kentucky he spoke on sin and its cure, and at Leesburg, Kentucky he spoke on 2 Thess. 1, in which he argued that the gospel must contain a command or it could not be disobeyed as verse 8 indicates. At Georgetown, Kentucky he addressed a large gathering in a Methodist church on faith, reformation and remission of sins, drawing mostly from Acts 2 and 3.

At Georgetown, Kentucky he again based his remarks upon Rom. 2, one of the great chapters of the Bible in Campbell's thinking, especially verse 7 which speaks of "glory, honor and immortality," one of the great themes in his teaching. In Frankfort, Kentucky, the capital of the state, the churches all closed their doors to him, but not to be outdone he

accepted an invitation from no less than the governor, holding conversations in his home. An academy was finally secured that accommodated several hundreds, allowing Campbell to speak upwards of three hours on 2 Tim. 3, which deals with the signs of the perilous age.

Alexander had a way of opening his meetings to anyone who might care to stand and register an objection. Sometimes a clergyman would speak for an hour in listing his grievances, with Campbell taking still another hour for a rejoiner. The meetings began early in the evening and would run for hours. Often there were morning and afternoon sessions as well, and extended conversations in between. Folk seemed to have had the time for such back in those days. An hour's speech was hardly an introduction for Campbell, with two to three hours the usual length of his discourses. He was quite an exhorter, urging the lost to obey the Christ, and everywhere he went he immersed people, oftentimes with his own hands.

The subjects referred to thus far suggest the wide sweep of his thought, as well as their Bible-centeredness. It helps to explain his antagonism to what he called "textuary preaching," the main cause, he thought, for the ignorance in the churches. Rather than taking a text and embarking on theological speculation, Campbell dealt with the depth and breadth of the great biblical themes, which kept him close to a rather large section of scripture, such as an entire chapter. Dealing with biblical ideas in their context, he would reach out almost endlessly to many of their ramifications, which moved him on and on into more and more scripture. He was always explaining, showing connections and interconnections, and yet always relating his findings to the sordid conditions in divided Christendom.

His discourse on John 3 in Lexington illustrates the broad sweep of his themes. Jesus' interview with Nicodemus was the basis for his treatment of the kingdoms of nature, grace and glory, drawn from the usual characteristics of any literal kingdom. Each kingdom was created by a word of God; each produces that which is consistent with its nature or constitution — *natural* beings, *gracious* beings, *glorious* beings; each has its own means of producing the desired end — natural life, spiritual life, eternal life; each kingdom has its own birth or mode of introduction — natural birth, birth of grace, glorious birth. The first kingdom is entered by birth of the flesh, the second by birth of water and the Spirit, the third of and from the grave.

Each kingdom has its own salvation: the first from natural dangers, God being the savior of all men; in the kingdom of grace the soul is saved from guilt and sin; in the kingdom of glory one is saved from the grave and both body and soul are glorified. But one cannot belong to any of the three kingdoms without being born into it, the kingdom of grace being entered only by being born of water and the Spirit, which is the meaning of regeneration.

All this he would further illustrate by reference to the tabernacle with its outer court (kingdom of nature), holy place (kingdom of grace) and the most holy place (kingdom of glory).

Other topics he treated on this trip to Nashville, along with the hunk of scripture that always served as his points of departure were: the mystery of iniquity (2 Thess. 2, Rev. 17-18), faith (Heb. 11), the seven one's (Eph. 4), the nature of obedience (1 Sam. 15), the constitution of the kingdom of heaven (Heb. 8), the conversion of the eunuch (Acts 8). Wherever he went Campbell had much to say about how the Christian faith leads to intelligence, purity and grace. It was beneath him to spend time with light and superficial themes.

Once in Nashville he spent much time with the congregation of reformers there and in adjacent communities. He immersed upwards of 30 people in the Cumberland river while he was there, and he had an extended controversy with Obadiah Jennings, pastor of Nashville's Presbyterian church. This took the form of a debate, with. moderators and all, and set the stage for further confrontations with Jennings in later years.

At one point in the exchange with Jennings he was accused of being a factionist, which brought a response that serves well to illustrate what Campbell considered to be the ground of unity. He insisted that he and his people could not be justly accused of being sectarian "so long as we exclude from the kingdom of Jesus only those who will not acknowledge him to be Lord by doing the things which he commanded; so long as we make our own opinions private property, and require no person on pain of excommunication to adopt them."

That makes for a valid guideline for us who are heirs of the movement begun by our pioneers. Had we been true to that formula set forth by Campbell in Nashville, we would not have divided at least one time for each decade since that grand day. We have divided because we *have* made our opinions tests of fellowship and have not held them as private property. — *the Editor*

Next installment: *Campbell goes to New York*

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step by the music which he hears, however measured or far away. — *Thoreau*

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THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOREVER

By Norman H. Crowhurst

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” That was true when he said it, although his listeners doubtless understood the words no better than most do today when they read them. The only way anyone can know what those words mean, is to experience that meaning. So let me start to tell my story of learning God’s way.

My earliest recollections concern a Sunday School I attended in pre-World-War England, in a town with a population of about 100,000. The group called themselves the Strict and Particular Baptists. In the Sunday School we listened to Bible stories which, aided by the models in the sandbox, seemed quite real. With what we learned from the Bible, we also learned that only those baptised into *our* church would go to heaven.

The total attendance at this little church was about 100, which meant the other 99,900 people in that town were destined for “the other place.” None of the kids I played with, for blocks around, would get to heaven. Do you see my problem? Then my parents told me not to try to convert my playmates. That could cause trouble, because we lived in a democracy. Rather difficult for a little boy of six to understand!

When I was seven we moved to London. My parents started going to a group called the Bible Students. These people also believed complete water immersion for baptism, but they did not believe everyone else is going to burn forever.

At the time, they believed, and emphasized, what Paul said in Romans 14:5, “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” They quoted Acts 17:10, 11 often, on the basis of which they called themselves Berean Bible Students. This appealed to me.

But in those days I heard a phrase that I have since heard in many quite different settings: “in the truth.” One person would ask another, “How long have you been in the truth?” Although I was yet to hear others use this phrase, about quite different ‘truths’, something about its usage purturbed me, even then.

One thing I liked in those days was their constant reference to 1 Thess. 5:21. They insisted that everyone must take that proof for himself. In 1928 I was baptised. What baptism meant to others around me I do not know, but Paul’s explanation in Gal. 3:27 said it to me. I remember wondering what difference that would make in my life.

After a while, looking back, I could distinguish two differences in my life that started at my baptism. First, I could discern the difference between what the scriptures actually say, and what was man-made interpretation, often quoted as “the scriptures clearly teach that . . .” (fill in your own heresy). However, I did not tell others about this discernment, because such questioning would not have been popular. I kept it to myself.

For example, one teaching was that the earth was created in six days each of seven thousand years duration. The Bible account can be verified scientifically, at least as to its correctness of sequence. But any fixation of a time duration to the days of Gen. 1 (or 2:4. where 6 days of chapter 1, become only 1 day) did not make sense, when God did not make the 'clock' till the fourth day! So I suffered their insistence on a 42,000 year creative cycle, rather than start an argument (2 Tim. 2:14).

This sort of assent went for many things. So why did I stay with them? Because I found that with this group one was free to discuss meanings, so long as one did not challenge such firmly held dogmas, that had been set forth by Charles Russell, the Watchtower Society's first president.

About that time, they were increasing their door to door activity and three years later; in 1931, the second president, Judge Rutherford, changed the name of the group to Jehovah's Witnesses. I was a little unhappy with his use of Isa. 43:1 0, 12 as 'proof' for use of this name. Shouldn't we have left? Where else could we study the Bible freely? We tried several churches, and they were frightened of us.

On one such occasion, a lady I met at her door asked why we could not come to her church for Bible study, instead of her coming to ours. We accepted this as an invitation. They were reading Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and looking up the texts cited in the foot-notes.

As they came to the conclusion of the texts that Bunyan had cited for one paragraph, some more texts came into my mind that would substantiate what was being discussed. When I asked if I might read these extra texts, I was told where the door was, and we were ejected with an insistence I will never forget.

I could recount hundreds of such visits, some of which lasted a week or two, some in church halls, some around home firesides, with Catholics, and all varieties of protestants. Just when the atmosphere seemed as if the presence of God's Spirit was going to lead us all into learning of Him, someone in the group would call the whole thing off.

So we had little choice, it seemed, but to stay with Jehovah's Witnesses. At least they did not throw us out — yet!

The other change of my life that started at my baptism can best be told by one of many, many experiences. A family had invited me back to study the Bible with them. And those Bible studies were that — no Watchtower textbooks for me! Just the Bible.

On this particular occasion, they had invited a young man in. They told me nothing about him. He himself quickly announced that he was an agnostic, that hundreds of very well-versed Christians had tried to prove to him that there is a God, but all had failed. He had heard every argument ever invented, but none had convinced him. However, his mind was open, he said, so I was welcome to try, if I thought I could do what hundreds of the best Christian brains had failed to do.

The gauntlet was down. I felt like I imagine little David felt, sallying out to meet Goliath! Spiritually, wasn't it even the same challenge. "Who is God?" I remember involuntarily offering up a silent prayer: a prayer that had no human words, but could best be translated as "Help!"

My mouth opened and I started talking. I heard myself talking about the design of the latest 4-engine aircraft, going into details that must have still been classified and, anyway, I did not know half the strange words I was saying. I concluded by saying that when we see that airplane fly, we know it is the work of an intelligent designer. You know the rest. It was not original. Paul used it at Romans 1:20.

The young man told me he had heard that argument before, but never had he heard such a 'way out' example used. He commented that not one person in a million would know what I was talking about and asked why I picked it. His attitude suggested that he thought my argument was all prepared and polished, from being used many times before.

I told him that I was one of those millions who did not know anything about aircraft design and that I had never used that example in argument before. He said, "And you are not an aircraft designer?" I repeated that the information I had been reciting was completely unknown to me, like so much gibberish.

Then he told me that he *was* an aircraft designer, recently graduated from college, and that every fact I had used was as current as it could be, just what he was using in his work. It had taken him more than four years to learn the facts I had recited in 15 minutes without any foreknowledge, all neatly put together.

We both sat silent for a few minutes. Then he said that the argument did not convince him — never would have. But how could I recite facts I did not know, so accurately? That must be supernatural! He could find no explanation for that. Unless I could write a book about such experiences but what good would they do? Each was given for the purpose in hand at that moment. This obstinate agnostic had his proof, even if it was not what either he or I expected for proof. We have a living God who can convert a Saul of Tarsus into an apostle Paul!

How long did I continue with the Jehovah's Witnesses? Almost 40 years, including the time when they were known as Berean Bible Students. But in all that time I never accepted their authoritarian ways. They gradually introduced a doctrine that says the Holy Spirit now guides only through their organization. We can only follow the Spirit by obeying organization instructions!

I never believed that. But the doctrine first crept in so insidiously that we were still free not to accept it, until we had 'proved' it for ourselves. What I had proved was that God still sends forth his Spirit as he did in earlier times, when one of His people needs that help.

Only when the organization called us to renounce that belief did we cease association with Jehovah's Witnesses. We could not deny the Holy Spirit. But there is much more to this long story. And the trials through which we went before we understood more fully just how God works covered a long period of time. So let us meet again (Acts 17:32) if you want to hear more of our story about the living God, who changes not.

Norman Crowhurst had never heard of the Church of Christ or the Restoration Movement until 1966, *when two young men called at his home. They told the Crowhursts they believed the Bible only, which is the position they themselves had held, having been baptized in* 1928. *For over 30 years, mostly in his native England, he had been a leader among Jehovah's Witnesses, whom he left after coming to this country. But his association with the Church of Christ was short-lived, a story he will proceed to tell.*

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READERS' EXCHANGE

ABOUT PAT BOONE

We followed your suggestion and invited Pat Boone to speak to us, especially to our teenagers. Not surprisingly, his schedule did not permit. However more than 40 teens and adults did attend his rally at McCormick Place. Some have been apprehensive about this, especially about the notices of it in our church bulletin. It is really hard to maintain the balance between exercising our liberty in Christ, and not inviting criticism, and possible ostracism, in the process. — *Bill Curry, 5141 St. Charles Rd. Berkeley, Illinois 60163*

Actually I had read your article on *High Adventure at Pat Boone's House* already. Since he stands withdrawn from as an heretic, then of course I sensed no fellowship toward such goings on. But I at least read it. Ira Rice, Roy Osborne, and Leroy Garrett being in "the body of Christ" is hardly the point. For there to be any fellowship between them they have to bring the same doctrine. 2 John 9-11. They don't. — *Ira Rice, 950 Greerland Dr., Nashville 37204*

I talked with Shirley Boone last night and it reminded me again that I wanted to write to, you about your last issue and your treatment on the meeting at Pat's place. It was great. I hope some of the more rigid brethren read it and it will bless them. The Lord has certainly been doing some wonderful things in my life. My "Church of Christ" background says they "can't happen" but they are! Truly, praise the Lord. — *California minister (Name withheld)*

I read your article on Pat Boone and the Jews to our elderly class Sunday morning in connection with Rom. 11, which we are studying. I think it gave us more appreciation of what Paul is saying about the Jews. — *Percy Faenger, 4 Lake Dr., Boone Terre, Mo.*

Just a word to say that I have read your recent item on "High Adventure at Pat Boone's house" with great appreciation. I had been waiting to see it. The description which you told me to look for was well worth the anticipation! — *Robert O. Fife, Milligan College, Tn. 37682*

Your article on grace and the one on the visit to Pat Boone's home were especially good. Keep up the good work you are doing and God be praised for the great things that are happening. — *Lowell Rees, Rt. 2, Nixa, Mo. 65714*

I've been wanting to write you how I appreciate your article on "Jewish night" at our house. It was great. The Lord is doing great things. I was in Atlanta recently at a meeting with a number of Jews. The Lord gave me Num. 11:29 ("Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"), which I related to Joel 2 and Acts 2. A rabbi said to me afterwards, "Son, you must have had a good homiletics teacher." I replied, "What is homiletics?" Once he explained I went on to tell him that I had a good teacher in the Lord. He said he wished his son had been there. I am happy to hear about the unity meeting in California, and I accept the invitation to appear, but it will have to be tentative. Everything is tentative these days, for in June we start shooting film on the "Death Dealers." But I am sending your letter to my manager and we'll be in touch. - *Pat Boone, 9255 Sunset Blvd., Suite 706, Los Angeles, Ca. 90069*

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BOOK NOTES

Teeth On Edge by our own Bob Fife, professor at Milligan College, is a tremendous little volume that is surely the buy of the year for only 1.95. The title comes from the prophetic cry that "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," and Bob has done well in describing how sour the grapes were in interracial relations even in the churches. Going back into old church records before the Civil War, he traces attitudes of church leaders toward blacks, and shows how after the emancipation black congregations began to emerge. He shows how liberty for the black man was also freedom for the slave-owner, and he argues convincingly that racism is a problem of the heart rather than merely social or economic. This book will be your teacher for good. You'll be better for having read it, that's for sure.

We will send you Ketcherside's latest bound volume of *Mission Messenger* for 3.00, entitled "One Great Chapter." Better still we will send you five of his bound volumes for 15.00 and you can make three 5.00 payments over next three months.

All books referred to in this column can be purchased through our office: 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Tx. 76201.

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